TITLE OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL :-

THE ROLE OF A FEW OF THE GROUPS DEVOTED FOR PRINT MAKING IN INDIA- A STUDY

PHD SYNOPSIS

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1. Tentative Title of Thesis - **THE ROLE OF A FEW OF THE GROUPS DEVOTED FOR PRINTMAKING IN INDIA- A STUDY**

2. Objectives

As a student of graphic art, form beginning to end of my collage days my dreams and thoughts, even today is all about this particular medium of art along with special interest in the area of printmaking.

So, naturally when I thought of researching in a limited way about this vast area printmaking from its incretion till today, its history, evolution and the associated technology became my centre of attention.

When I tried to connect myself with the resent printmaking process, I thought it would be very much relevant to probe into the past and make that a starting point though the subject had to be deal with specific objective but considering the vast area that has surrounded the subject, I narrowed down my research into group activity, in printmaking.

As we know any art form the most conservative thinking is that the objective of any art work is to create an aesthetic environment. With such conservative thinking sometimes we have a tendency to restrict art only within certain space. But through my learning when I developed interest for research, I felt that art any art work have multiple objectives, while aesthetics aspect is very important but reaching out equal importance. Any individual artist may have extraordinary talent and skill but at the end of the day he will be judged by people who are just not art historian or art critic but also common viewers.

With this objective in mind, initially I started looking into the work of individual masters with a view to understand their communication process through their work. Then when I went deep into the history of this particular form I found the basic technique and tools needed for printmaking makes it a difficult task, as such facilities are not available without having a complete studio backup.

All these put together I started looking into the whole thinking from various angels. At this stage somehow I felt that to achieve the desired goal, The printmakers can think of group activity when they can engage as a group to promote this form in more economic way and also reach out to people.

But here again I thought of only few groups who have been successful to promote and also extend their reach in a more meaningful way.

This infect is the objective of my research which could focus on the importance of group activity.

we must admit that the contribution offered by Indian printmakers is considerably noteworthy .Evidences and paradigms of the very practice in that sense are quite abrupt as well isolated in terms of any aesthetic discourse in the Indian context. The medium emerged as a means of mass communication. But slowly evolved into a resource of pure aesthetics expression. Printing, as a process is closely related to reproduction and duplication. The technology enables to produce multiple copies. However, printmakers over the years have widened the scopes by exploiting the indigenous potential of its process and techniques.

It is intended to revisit the trial of printmaking over the years during the pre and post independence era.

3. Expected span of the research - three year

4. Methodology

a. Access of documents

. Museums, Institutions ,print Making studios ,Libraries and Individual collections ,exhibitions, press briefing and publication ,catalogue .

b. Documentation process

. Interviews

. Study of prints in form of illustration and through display in exhibition.

. Also study of prints of individuals and group member through various publication.

. Colour photographs

. Caption for illustrations will be as follows: The name of artist (if available), title of the work ,medium of work, school or style , date or period ,size (in metric measurements),name of the collection (museum, institution or individual)

c. Target Break up

.Documentation - one year

. Compilation- one year

. Final stage preparation for presenting the thesis for pre submission seminar - Six months

. Submission - Final submission after six months of pre submission seminar

5. Text

. Final paper will be provided in printed copy and CD format.

. Either endnotes or bibliography, not both will be used for the references.

. Non English words other than proper names will be in italics

. Use of diacritical marks on all Indian words except proper names

. Information about the contributor will be as follows: Name, qualification ,occupation or current assignment, important ,published works, projects ,other relevant information

6. Title of the Thesis - The role of a few of the groups devoted for printmaking in India - A study

My thesis basically the observations are towards how the different printmaking groups in India which explored the possibilities of making printmaking a subject for social interact . The tentative title of chapters of the proposed research is given as under.

Chapter I- Introduction

Chapter II- Role of art education in the history of visual art .

Chapter III- Development of printmaking

Chapter IV- Commencement of printmaking group activity

Chapter V- Introducing a major printmaking groups in India (A) Group8 (B) Indian printmakers Guild (C) Special references of printmaking activity in the Realist group

Chapter VI- Conclusion

Bibliography

Brief synopsis for the topic

Chapter I .

Introduction

During my student days, while studying history of art particularly printmaking and the progress and development of this particular form of art had always been a subject of deep interest to me . From the detailed history , specific aspect of collective effort such as Group activity inspired me to further research about its functioning . Being a student of visual arts, somehow I always felt the focus is always on individual artist, like his medium , form , characterisation and his impact on total art scenario .

Growth in any sphere occurs due to certain ideas ,an environment prevailing , circumstances leading to it , efforts put in for it by individuals or group of people .It is with this idea that I , myself as a graphic student it is opportunity for me , through this subject the journey of all the vital areas which led to the gradual growth of printmaking activities. Although it is difficult for me to go to length about each detail as my search has been started , but in spite of that I would like to touch all points concerning in my thesis project.

So as to discuss about the whole subject, I have divided my write-up into different chapters according to the time span and further sub-divided them accordingly to the agendas which play a vital role. although it is difficult to discuss about these decades separately as the activities overlap each other, still i have done so far an easy understanding of the changes taking place.

In the first chapter I will discuss briefly about the general historical background of how print making gradually started in India.

While getting into the details of printmaking. it becomes necessary to deal with foundation and history of printmaking , at least briefly.

But considering my topic limited to group activity in the field of print making ,I would like to focus mainly into the emergence and progress of this form in India .

Of course here also if we try to go chronologically ,we find as early as sixteenth country mechanical printing appears in India the history says that a process of re production was a known thing in India and we see many evidences , when we go through Indus valley civilization. The Vedic period is also market with practice of making print with block with the beginning of European influence since early 10th century and also others colonial influence brought process of printing through important printing presses .

However the authentic of such historical detail might be questionable. There is no doubt about the implementation of certain practices particularly in Goa and southern cost of India but not with the involvement of Indian artist. So it was mainly European artist who were active.

1816 is a significant year when we could see Indian printmaker working on graphic art around mid 18th century the process so the major change started evolving in Bengal .this became the starting point for the local artist getting involved in graphic art.

The earliest printed picture made by any Indian artist is seen in 1816 and the artist was Ramachand Roy no doubt this answers the question related to india and Indian artist in the field of printmaking. The illustration form Ramachand Roy also had metal plate engraving .During this period the prints made by Indian artist where either link to folk-art or court. During this period Indian artist worked for European patrons making mostly the prints in the intaglio process.

The first lithography press in India 1824 then the gradual demand started growing up for printed picture and this resulted into prints becoming presses coming up all over India.

Though the topic that I have selected for the research work is a development of much latter stage but without getting into the historical aspect of printmaking, the different stage that this form have gone through the appearance of groups would not be clear.

So coming back to 19th century we also must mention about a particular area of Indian printmaking activity, that is Bat-tala .As Bat-tala became popular and reputed there by becoming an important center for publication till the end of 19t century, the history of this period is a very much discussed fact and need no further elaboration. In fact Bat-

tala, motivated foundation of art schools in important cities like Madras,Calcutta,Bombay,Jaipur and Lahore all these happened between 1850 and 1875.

An exception that we see in form of individual effort which came from Raja Ravi Barma. He had setup his own lithography press sometime around end of 19th century. This happed in Bombay and the unique aspect of individual effort was the pioneering effort from Ravi Barma to reach the masses with a intention to popularize this artistic medium.

Then came the era of institutionalizing graphic art. Which starting from printmaking had all other forms like wood engraving, wood cut ,Lithography ,etching and many other mediums. It is worth mentioning

here that till certain time Graphic art continued to be connected with reproduction and duplication of an image and it did not get the status of creative medium. Though European art education were quite advanced to practice graphic art as a creative medium but in India it's still lingered as a process of reproduction. So the illustration's of various books journals continued as it is.

The institutions gradually come to the realization that graphic art should start playing in a wider arena of arts.

Here comes Rabindranath Tagore with his great expectations to make India a prominent force in international art scenario.

The result is Kala-Bhavana starts taking a shape under the guidance of Tagore in The year 1919.Here again we have to narrow down our focus to individual excellence line artist Mukul Chandra Dey.

Kala Bhavan was not really something which came up at the strike of the pen. This is actually culmination of "Vichaitra club" which was formed in 1915 by the Tagore family members at Jorasanko the home of Tagore's.

Coming back to Mukul Dey and his growth towards becoming almost a complete artist by virtue of his learning experience in America (1916-1917) and his stint in England in 1920.Mukul Dey becoming a full time printmaker with all the expertise and experience made "vichitra club" a very impressive center of art activity. The further edition was

interest taken by Gagendranath Tagore's interest in lithography and subsequently setting up his own press.

This is how in India ,printmaking became a real creative medium in the second decide of the 20th century .There after we see a continuity from vichitra club to Kala Bhavana with the master artist Nandalal Bose taking the lead .Nandalal could understand quickly the need of establishing kala bhavana as a major center for graphic art. The creativity of Nandalal Bose came into forefront with use of linoleum block to illustrate "sahaj path" a book by Tagore a Bengali primer for children.

All these put together a noticeable change was observed in the field of "Graphic Art" A realization came amongst the practicing artist that graphic art associated with printmaking have enough potential to be an independent form.

The reasons like lack of technical knowledge which was holding back form necessary progress gradually became clearer and the artist reach a definite level of confidence to move ahead with printmaking as a major weapon in their hand .During 1940 onwards, which saw the thirst for independence and created a stir in every public field, the print making also faced a kind of set back with a temporary pause only because of technical reason and not the artist losing interest in any way.

There after the surge came in the post independent period that is 1950 onwards. This period saw a gradual opening up for new possibility, a new language which made graphic art more expressive compare to previous days.

The middle of 19th century, the progress of graphic art gathered a new impetus which made it definitely more aesthetic with expression of the artist becoming the main focus.

In the 20th century the opportunity and avenues open duo more to make this form of art further more artistic in expression .Some of the names that made approaching graphic art from a new angel involving a combination of process are Y.K.Sukla,Haven Das and chittoprasad.They all introduced various form of woodcut,linocut and also polychoramatic wood cut prints.

This was the period in the post independence days when printmaking made its place in the mainstream of art. With government help for promoting contemporary art also

preservation, certain developments came up ,which encouraged introducing Indian art to others country. This also resulted in positive steps by foreign country who displayed their work in different cities in India.

There after certain rapid changes come up and all went in favor of the progressive journey of printmaking.

Some note worthy developments were Somnath Hore heading department of Graphic art in the Delhi collage then Sanat Kar actively engaging himself in printmaking with his involvement in "society of contemporary artist". All these resulted into invention of new methodology and also a change in aesthetic language in the field of printmaking.

All these developments particularly centering around kala Bhavana made concerned people think the importance of this form of art. The experiment continue and with the time more and more artist started getting involved into printmaking with genuine interest to practice printmaking and try different techniques. In fact from here the printmaking scenario in India took a new turn, basically the artist involved started using the technique is ignoring the reproductive value and concentrating on fine arts aspect.

For any researcher in this field ,this turning point becomes an important and also a priority issue to know the journey in full.

As the process has a long complicated journey to get established as an main stream art, naturally the thought process keeps shifting from one movement to another creating new routes for printmaking becoming a

center of attraction even for illustrious artist to join the stream. Though in art, no journey is ever complete but the turn it feat and possibility it opens up, motivates the students and the juniors to look into in detail the impacts, art makes just not on artist but also on the community and the society around it.

This is also has been the main motivation particularly for me and with any association in Kala Bhavana to research on "Group activity"

Group activity in the field of art is not exactly or a new phenomena, even in the field of contemporary art we have noticed how a group of artist in different states have formed

groups with the names such as "Bengal school", "The Calcutta group", "Bombay progressive artist group", "Delhi silpi chokra"etc.

This group movement is not really are result of any new challenge to bring this art closer to people and about the possibility of carrying on the practice even after passing out from institutions.

I think this is how I got my involvement into researching on group activity. To express bit more clearly it becomes necessary to deal with particularly three main groups which is found to have taken printmaking to new direction ,though none of the groups continues as a group for long but left a deep mark and also kept new possibilities open to future printmakers. Development of group activity opening up new possibilities in printmaking.

The significant aspect of "Group activity" is its approach with a definite kind of agenda and also sometimes manifesto. While working on this the attempt has been made to explore such effort from that direction. True ,that each group to start with had an individual artist in the forefront to initiate and activated along with light minded artist to reach a definite goal.

The three group discuss here looking at chronologically, the first one o appear in the scene is Group 8.

The year 1968 saw Jogmohan Chopra taking the initiative to form this group. This was the period when the young printmakers after passing out from various institute were facing problems of maintaining the continuity. The form itself was so much technology oriented that it was near impossible to process printmaking unit for any individual artist. This was the feeling of many printmakers who otherwise was thinking whether their whole learning process would come to a stop.

This was the time when Jogomohan Chopra came to the forefront and realizing the agony decided to install a press in his house to encourage the younger artist to cone and work together. This effort also resulted into the group experimenting with various forms and techniques which could make printmaking affordable at the same time rich with aesthetic content.

Once the group got convinced about their collective effort to take printmaking to a different level and also bring in a sense of security within the printmaking community, they started organizing exhibition and workshop. Such exhibitions though were city oriented but it had all the intention to involve viewers and artist from all over India.

The leader of the group Jogmohan Chopra himself being an artist keen to experiment ,the group also started experimenting with printmaking connected processes such as working with inexpensive substitute sourcing form local agencies. Another objective of the group was to emphasize on the fact that prints may be price wise cheaper but have its own originality coming from edition being limited and bearing of artist's signature. It must be known that the Group 8 was registered society anthe manifesto was making printmaking and easily understood meaningful activity.

The very fact that this was the first opportunity for printmakers to work in a group makes one more and more interested to know the approach ,attitude and creativity pattern of artist with individual talents and the achievement of group.

Primarily this is enough to motivate any practicing artist, scholars or researcher to know more and more details about printmaking group activity and its impact.

As we are looking at the scenario of group activity chronologically the next that comes to the scene is "The Realist"

From the formation to growth and continuation, every aspect of "The Realist" had a factor of new signature in it which is found to be opening up a new world in printmaking.

The initial idea to form the group came from not a practicing printmaker but a noted art critic and his foreman engaged as editor Lalit Kala Academy Delhi. Amit Mukhapadhya. His effort to bring together the group of artist who were ready to work collectively with a common agenda surrounded by various aspects of socialism. The artist being mainly based at santiniketan, they often got engaged in be dates debate around different art form with an idea to create a new language. Their depth of commitment immediately drew attention from different auras who was close following in the changes in the trend of art. That is how we fine the art historian R.Sivakoumar observation the objective of

the group as defying the modernist nation of individualism and working towards a particular style which is little far from typical market oriented art practice.

The other interesting point which is quite an inspiration for any art scholar to study is how a group of young artist changing their location as a student or after finishing their student days once again got together and felt the need to bring a different culture of practice which could connect the ,artist in a much border way with the society. So the group ultimately decided to have a very clear agenda in an around may 1984. The another first that adds to "The Realist" was to have a very clear cut manifesto.

We get an idea of the manifesto from the reference drawn by Amit Mukhapadhya saying "To create living art is my goal".

Probing into the thought, philosophy along with the objective, it is found that the group very activity played the role of social commentator. The other note worthy aspect was their focus on techniques of printmaking which included woodcut and silk screen process as well as terrocota sculpture. They definitely dealt with a particular subject of art which intern dealt with the reality of life. Even without going into much detailed about the history of the formation of the group, their activity visibly shows their concern about various form of exploitation of the society.

Such concern and a collective effort to project a social awareness itself is a motivation for me to not only views their works with absolute attention but also to make it an agenda for future art practitioner. The resolve with which the every talent of the group collectively functioned is something which has rarely been seen in art practices in India.

It is just not focusing on a particular commitment but also accompanied by a meaningful thought process to reach to common people particularly the art lovers with a humble approach leaving aside the competitive approach and marketing aspect.

May be in the present context ,due to changes in social reality it might be difficult to think of formation of such group activity but definitely we have plenty in our hand which are enough ,it at all a collective movement could take off.

While "The Realist" were still in the scene, we find another collective effort coming up in 1990 and to be more specific 15th August with the name "The Indian Printmakers Guild"

The fact that this group started with an objective that the printmaking has to be elevated from the common concretion of this being a medium not of same hierarchy with other art forms is itself an inspiring aspect to get into further detail about the formation of the group. For any student or scholar of printmaking the limitation of the form is known because of the very fact that the word "PRINT" is associated with it. Though it is known that ,due to developments aboard and the practice of printmaking is no more restricted to only printmakers, to keep with the pace India also started gradually reinventing itself and spread the wings in the field of printmaking but limitations remain.

Keeping all these in view a group of twelve highly talented artist decided to work collectively mainly to establish printmaking in the world of Indian art. They were white aware that their work is known only to a restricted community and not to the casual viewers and that is why they were all the more determined to get as much support as possible from studio gallery and private institutions to take care effort to a different level.

Here the group effort was totally different compare to what two other earlier groups attempted to achieve. The difference was in trying to bring out the terms used in printmaking such as "Original print, reproduction, imaging on master plate, edition, numbering of edition etc to clarify and elaborate further thereby creating a sense of ethics for original prints.

One has to remember that all these were done just not to popularize printmaking but also to bring it to the level of status that it deserved.

Here comes the importance of collective effort which is a significant point of study that brings out the fact of individual talent contributing to group activity.

During the details study it is found that just not by numbers of artist in the group. The commitment with a definite agenda definitely matters, whicterm creates a chain reaction for other practitioner also to get pride and recantation in what they do.

For any learner in this field even in recent days would appreciate the importance of the contribution that a collective effort can make it there is an environment of understanding of the prevailing situation, as it happened for the printmakers.

To all of us the art something away from real life ,not something far from common understanding. Neither it is a luxury.

It art has to find his meaningful place in our day to day life, we have to find out from the history how at various stages group activity has made meaningful contribution and similar possibility we have for future progression as well.

Chapter II

Role of art education in the history of visual art:

For any research on any medium of visual art, it is essential to know starting with what we are doing today and then gradually trace back from history what was the scenario that led us to present scenario.

In the journey of human civilization, education continued to get a growing importance. Naturally keeping with that the value of education along with it quality is of utmost priority today. While talking about contemporary scenario particularly about the quality of education, the visual art education plays an important role in building a human character in ultimately a nation.

It is now unanimously agreed that in some form or other visual art education has to be a part right from school days. With this in our agenda, at later stage also a student opting for any specialization is likely to possess an imaginative mind with creative ideas.

While stating this I can stay with conviction that the idea of visual art education in just not a vague philosophy but in a way of reality. Neither I am trying to impress upon this thought with many bias being an art student nor scholar .It has taken as quite some time to come out form colonial form and ultimately connect ourselves to the system close to our soil. Initially our problem was how to overcome and teach the basic but I think how we have been able to overcome such barrier an reach a place of pride.

To justify this further I would like to put the idea of Santiniketan originated by Rabindranath and thereafter developing it is a center of art and music laid the foundation shown for connecting art with education.

However prior to Tagore and Santiniketan related art education format, it is necessary to refer to the sequence and the period, at least briefly, which explains the journey from

industry to art and ultimately resulting into formalize art institute for developing a proper language of art.

It is well known fact that English rule was not in very much in favor of restructuring our education and society. Their interest however around commercial activity and the medium English education needed for that. They continued to do it without interfering with any traditional art form.

Since 19th century the media started focusing on defining art and industry, characteristic wise that was the period when even the educated cross section had no clear idea about form of visual art.

Somewhere around middle of the 19th century we find the English population residing around Calcutta got interested to make art a cultural practice.

The history says that in 1843, on 7th of March a school was established for art education but it was a short lived effort. In another historical details we find certain controversy about exact year of establishment of art school .But such schools were the result of gradual progression of technical institute meant for meeting the demand the technicians in typical industries. The brighter side of it is the growth of art institutions in Calcutta, Madras, Bombay and also in Jaipur and Lahore. The important development that we notice here in change of patrons and attempt to form a proper pattern for art education.

After a protracted journey comprising of various experiments the art education through institutions more or less got a shape.

In the earlier chapter, I have already mentioned about emergence of Tagore shaping the initial experiments towards art education, but certain historical details focusing on the direction of art education need to be mention .The history of visual art always brought to the forefront the importance of Indian identity in contradiction to European thought.

In a situation like this appears a very special English art teacher Ernest *Binfield Havell*. It happened in 189 6 when we see Havell heading the art school in Calcutta with a determination to make the student conscious about their own heritage .Unfortunately

Havell was misunderstood by the media and also the students who were biased about western art education and in the process they ignore their own heritage and creativity .

Somehow a new opening was found with *Abanindranath Tagore* and *Havell* combination. *Abanindranath Tagore*, in spite of having learnt art academic from of English art teacher, continued to search Indigenous style in his painting .Finally *Abanindranath* started leading Calcutta art school around 1905. This made a beginning of the first art movement in India in form of Bengal school under his leadership.

During this historical developments, 1920 onwards two different development in art scene. One a new generation of artist in Calcutta and another Bombay based landscape painter. These groups worked in direction opposite to that of oriental. At a later stage once again a few story European movement like Cubism made its entry in India through different media.

Thereafter Indian art had to struggle through various difficult condition but fortunately in one of the policy statement on education we find a very clear pronouncement made by even European expert saying, "For Indian art in the proper sense of the word is a matter of principle and not of mere manner and, if the sprit is there and can find the expression, the art will remain Indian whatever be the medium or the technique of that expression".

Chapter III

Development of printmaking

For the history and development at comparatively advanced stage that is between 1850 and 1950 has been documented quite in detail.

For my research referring to related books and in particular narrative of Dr. Nirmalendu Das has been a great learning experience for me.

The details say that graphic art become a part of art school teaching right from the beginning. But other than art schools the presence of graphic art was felt in early 19th century inform of illustrations for printed publication. In these cases, all the techniques like wood cut, wood engraving, metal plate engraving, etching and lithograph played

significant role, this was the scenario mainly outside the art school activity. The art schools in India the focus was on teaching illustration and copy work.

Once again quoting from history I found

- Appearance of private presses around the country from 1870 onward.
- such presses were spread out ranging from Dacca to Punjab, inclusive of places in western, northern and southern Indian.
- what we call mass communication today is probably a result of the vibrating activity of printing presses.
- while woodcut prints were monochrome with colored ink stains, the lithograph ware polychromatic.

The first Indian modern artist using graphic medium was Ravi Barma. He is known for connecting to masses as his themes ware religious and social. End of 19th century he comes up with his own lithography press in Bombay.

Then comes the Tagore family based in Calcutta. Jorasanko the Calcutta home of Tagores emerged as a center of activity with an establishment known us "pioneering force in practice of etching learned the technique in America (1916-17) from James Blinding Slame. He also got etching and engraving training in 1920 under Mourhead Bone. The first Indian print makers, trained abroad on graphic who continue his art practice as whole time printmakers since his return in 1926. Then we come across another artist from Tagore family, Gagendranath Tagore who had keen interest in lithography and setup his own press. So the "Vichitra Club" along with the new art institution in Santiniketan-Kala Bhavana made a new beginning in Indian art practice. By this time "Vichitra Club" became very active with involvement from Abanindranath Tagore. The artist of such high reputed like Abanindranath, paleographic printing became a reality. Finally his continuation in paleographic process, in 1924 appeared an

illustrated book on Bengali alphabet, meant for children. In this printing process we see him working with crayon and Touché on Zinc plate.

As we find from the history and the series of event chronologically stated by Nirmalendu Das the surge in printing activity came up with Nandalal practicing graphic art. Subsequent years such as 1921-22 the French artist Madame Andra demonstrating wood engraving technique and 1923 a Mexican artist Fryman demonstrating in Kala Bhavan the technique of Japanise multi colored wood cut process. All these put together Nandalal's creativity reached a new height enriching the printmaking media in all various aspect of possibility.

In the year 1930-31 we find Nandalal Base using linoleum block in the illustration of "Sahaj Path" composed by Rabindranath. The clarity of this linocut illustration of book sets an example in the field of graphic. This is being stated though it is generally known that Picasso was the first artist to use linoleum in 1950 as a medium.

Such innovative practice led the Indian artist changing their approach ware the graphic art witnessed recognizing graphic media believing in independent work of art and not just its reproductive value. So, 1921 onwards Kala Bhavan became a center for practicing graphic art as a major medium. The artist who made this possible through their experiment ware Ramendranath Chakroborty, Manindra Vhusan Gupta, and Viswarup Ghosh.

However the period of 1940 onward that is the starting of Indian independence movement the printmaking technique somehow lost its importance because of its dependence on technique. The time and the national scene become hindrance to printmaking.

Various constraints such as availability of material knowledge of technology and related support system did not allow the progress of graphic art with all its possibility till 1950. But it is worth mentioning that even in this disturb period, graphic media was been practiced by some of the highly committed artist in other Indian centers. The artist ware L.M.Sen, Y.K. Sukla, Muralidhar Tali where the prominent figure.

Chapter IV

Commencement of printmaking group activity

For any research on any medium of visual art, it is essential to know starting with what we are doing today and then gradually trace back from history what was the scenario that led us to present scenario.

In the journey of human civilization, education continued to get a growing importance. Naturally keeping with that the value of education along with it quality is of utmost priority today. While talking about contemporary scenario particularly about the quality of education, the visual art education plays an important role in building a human character in ultimately a nation.

It is now unanimously agreed that in some form or other visual art education has to be a part right from school days. With this in our agenda, at later stage also a student opting for any specialization is likely to possess an imaginative mind with creative ideas.

While stating this I can stay with conviction that the idea of visual art education in just not a vague philosophy but in a way of reality. Neither I am trying to impress upon this thought with many bias being an art student nor has scholar .It taken as quite some time to come out form colonial form and ultimately connect ourselves to the system close to our soil. Initially our problem was how to overcome and teach the basic but I think how we have been able to overcome such barrier an reach a place of pride.

To justify this further I would like to put the idea of Santiniketan originated by Rabindranath and thereafter developing it is a center of art and music laid the foundation shown for connecting art with education.

However prior to Tagore and Santiniketan related art education format, it is necessary to refer to the sequence and the period, at least briefly, which explains the journey from

industry to art and ultimately resulting into formalize art institute for developing a proper language of art.

It is well known fact that English rule was not in very much in favor of restructuring our education and society. Their interest however around commercial activity and the medium English education needed for that. They continued to do it without interfering with any traditional art form.

Since 19th century the media started focusing on defining art and industry, characteristic wise that was the period when even the educated cross section had no clear idea about form of visual art.

Somewhere around middle of the 19th century we find the English population residing around Calcutta got interested to make art a cultural practice.

The history says that in 1843, on 7th of March a school was established for art education but it was a short lived effort. In another historical details we find certain controversy about exact year of establishment of art school .But such schools were the result of gradual progression of technical institute meant for meeting the demand the technicians in typical industries. The brighter side of it is the growth of art institutions in Calcutta, Madras, Bombay and also in Jaipur and Lahore. The important development that we notice here in change of patrons and attempt to form a proper pattern for art education.

After a protracted journey comprising of various experiments the art education through institutions more or less got a shape.

In the earlier chapter, I have already mentioned about emergence of Tagore shaping the initial experiments towards art education, but certain historical details focusing on the direction of art education need to be mention .The history of visual art always brought to the forefront the importance of Indian identity in contradiction to European thought.

In a situation like this appears a very special English art teacher Ernest *Binfield Havell*. It happened in 189 6 when we see Havell heading the art school in Calcutta with a determination to make the student conscious about their own heritage .Unfortunately

Havell was misunderstood by the media and also the students who were biased about western art education and in the process they ignore their own heritage and creativity .

Somehow a new opening was found with *Abanindranath Tagore* and *Havell* combination. *Abanindranath Tagore*, in spite of having learnt art academic from of English art teacher, continued to search Indigenous style in his painting .Finally *Abanindranath* started leading Calcutta art school around 1905. This made a beginning of the first art movement in India in form of Bengal school under his leadership.

During this historical developments, 1920 onwards two different development in art scene. One a new generation of artist in Calcutta and another Bombay based landscape painter. These group worked in direction opposite to that of oriental's. At a later stage once again a few story European movement like Cubism made its entry in India through different media.

Thereafter Indian art had to struggle through various difficult condition but fortunately in one of the policy statement on education we find a very clear pronouncement made by even European expert saying, "For Indian art in the proper sense of the word is a matter of principle and not of mere manner and, if the sprit is there and can find the expression, the art will remain Indian whatever be the medium or the technique of that expression".

Chapter V

Introducing a major printmaking groups in India (A) Group8 (B) Indian printmakers Guild (C) Special references of printmaking activity in the Realist group

The emergence of Nationalism is different parts of this develop at around 19th century, look the society and politics towards a narrowness. This we see Fascism raising it this extort of destructive reality of World War. It was strength felt that art can`t keep it is island inlets own country, which otherwise should respond to the whole world to spread its wings.

1940, this started finding out a new meaning for Marx hits. The third society, literature and filed of arts faced challenge free second World War, the exploitation of British evolutionalism and this devastating 1943 fanning.

Already Gagendranath and Amrita shergil was there with a fusion of east and west in a highly logical manner. Even Tagore, felt unification with international ideas essential to find greater meaning of art. These exam Nandalal, Benodbehari, Ramkinkar and atone with their own interpretation, of birding the tradition with mordernisms we get jainal abedin portraying disaster of fanning and its Indian reality.

This Finials also have Chittaprosad Bhattacharya an artist influenced by Marxism looking at life differently, the self taught artist Debabrata Mukhopadhyay also influenced by Marxism establishing a commitment to society through his lines.Somnath Hore is the other outstanding figure whose major contribution through his works brought the stark reality of 1943 fanning and observed TRIBHANGA movements from also grantors. His Famous graphic work ``Birth of a white Rose`` comes up as a protest to killing of practice Inmmka in Africa. The solitude ``mother and child' symbolizes American aggression in Vietnam. All these artists made a quick impact for India to get modernity in art. The ``Calcutta Group``in 1942 initiated the idea of modernism and came to reality in 1942.This becomes enter in this writings of Pradosh Dasgupta. This group had its exhibition in Mumbai in 1944-45.

Thus came this Bombay Progressive Group in 1947 with artists like Francis Newton Souza,K.H. Ara, sayed hyder Raza, Baker and M.F.Hussain.about which we wanted to produce a new art.....a anew art which was entirely medium plus it was modern``.

The First exhibition of this group was in Bombay in 1944.In the post Independence era in Indian Art around 60` came a new bridge of artists with their original idea about art beginning in new and format. As a result we find various groups looking up.

Many drawings this time was not showed by western influence, on this other hand they tried to understand modernity keeping root in their own soil. they were really rooted strongly to the life and society as a whole.

Group 8 - in the mid 19th century, there was a formation of a team of working artists devoted to printmaking; registered under the societies registration at xxi of 1860, with a strong willing to a higher position the Indian printmaking scene and bringing it into existence. It believed essentially in group activity rather than the promotion of individual artist members. Formed under the staunch leadership of Mr. Jagmohan Chopra.

Nine members but the name group - 8? Mr. Chopra replied it is a just a name, then thoughtfully adding, `` i think it is because number 8 occurred many a time in our activities and as during the start of the planning, 8 members were present. Moreover it`s not that i am astrologically inclined or superstitions`` and said, he never wanted to have a high sounding`` and said he never wanted to have a high sounding name ultimately stuck to the name `Group - 8.

Naming the founder members: -

Jagmohan Chopra Santosh Jain Mittal

Anupam Sood Yogshakti Chopra

Laxmi Dutta Vijaya Sharma

Jagdish Dey Umesh Varma

Prashant Vichitra

Later on, Suneeta Kanwade, Priya Mukherjee, anjula Indra Gupta.In Chandigarh Ishwar Dayal, Brahm Prakash, Viren Tanwar, Subhash chander and surinder lal chopra became the associate members of his group.

Group 8

Though commercial printmaking in India had existed for years in the form of colonial engravings, Battala woodcuts, and Raja Ravi Varma oleographs, it was only in the 20th century that contemporary Indian prints originated as a fine art and artists refined

printmaking into an independent medium of expression. Somnath Hore, the father of modern Indian prints, worked and experimented widely with the medium under the initial guidance of Krishna Reddy, who had been greatly influenced by master printmaker Stanley William Hayter at his famed Atelier 17 in Paris.

In 1958 Hore was the head of the Printmaking Department, College of Art, Delhi. He had won the National Award for a colour etching called*Birth of a White Rose*. He was soon associated with his images of mother and child, man and animal, his use of cubist schematic elements, and his working with monotones or colour viscosity printing from the same plate. Somnath Hore had acquired an old printing machine which was used as an etching machine. NB Joglekar, printmaker at the Fine Arts Department, MS University, Baroda, worked as not only the external examiner but also brought surplus material for the Delhi students.

Somnath Hore and Jagmohan Chopra were determined to take printmaking to a more serious level. Chopra said (in a conversation with Gayatri Sinha) that the student community responded well to the engrossing technicalities of printmaking. Hore used to tell the students to work on different permutations and combinations in just one plate in order to learn the vocabulary of printmaking. In this way Hore and Chopra had a student working on a plate for a whole year. The duo managed to spread awareness among the artists that they had struck on a very special medium, namely printmaking. The artists were fascinated by the textures and visuals that could be produced through different processes such as lithographs, etchings, monoprints and woodcuts, which would not be possible in paintings or drawings.

When Jagmohan Chopra founded "Group 8" in 1968, in New Delhi, new doors for this unique art form were finally opened. The fraternity of the printmaking artists was given an identity. Chopra had created an association of working artists, all of whom were devoted to printmaking. He felt that this completely neglected medium needed both more focus and more recognition. After the two wars there was an acute shortage of metal. Even though resources for making art were in short supply, Chopra designed and

built a printmaking machine and made it available in his living room to the Group 8 artists which comprised of Jagdish De, Umesh Varma, Prashant Vichitra, Lakshmi Dutta, Jagmohan Chopra, Yogshakti, Surinder Chopra and the youngest of the members, Anupam Sud. Furthermore, Chopra tried to create an awareness of printmaking's many possibilities through his textual surfaces and vigorous abstractions.

Group 8 held their first exhibitions of all-India prints at the Lalit Kala Akademi and the India Fine Arts and Crafts Society. The group also developed links to exhibit in Baroda, Calcutta and Hyderabad. They often used the inexpensive cardboard-based collograph instead of the more expensive etching processes. Thanks to their holistic attitude they included photographer Raghu Rai and invited arts citric like Keshav Malik, Richard Bartholomew, SN Krishna and Krishna Chaitanya to experiment and create their own prints.

According to Anupam Sud, "Once one had graduated from college there was no place to do printmaking and this was at the back of our mind even when we were students. I distinctly remember speaking very disparagingly about printmaking the first time I went to the studio, voicing my fears about the uselessness of printmaking as an art pursuit. As a technologically mediated form of expression it requires huge initial expenses and it can nver be a solitary pursuit like painting. I think Mr Chopra's response to our scene of disquiet was bighearted to say the least. He set up a workshop in his house and all flocked to it to make works. It became the hub of activities with whoever was in town visiting the studio to see what we were up to. The number of artist who worked there is simply amazing: Prashant Vichitra, Jagdish Dey, Umesh Verma these are just a few names that I can name. Mr Chopra had a much larger vision and he built up associations with likeminded artists in other cities. Even painters from Baroda like Gulam Sheikh were deeply attracted to printmaking. Needless to say the community of printmakers in Baroda, like Jyoti Bhatt, P Dhumal, and Rini Dhumal, as well as artists from Hyderabad and Calcutta, all participated actively in our exhibitions with great enthusiasm. Moreover, research scholars like Laxmi Dutta Gupta, Paneerselvam and others also worked with Chopra. Later, in the early 70's, Shobha and Rameshwar

Broota, who had become printmaking enthusiasts as well, invited Mr Chopra to set up a printmaking studio at the Silpi Chakra"

Being the youngest entrant to Group 8, Anupam Sud had the rich experience of learning from Jagmohan Chopra. "He was always very experimental and he never let anything come in his way to achieve what he set out to do. His experiments with collography for example were a result of the shortage of art material caused by the string of border wars that India entered into in the 1960's. With no zinc plates to work with, he sought inexpensive substitutes resorting to cardboard as a matrix. One knows Kanwal Krishnaji had set up his own press and experimented with the medium in the 1950's, but his was a solitary pursuit. Professor Chopra had a different position...a community oriented approach. One of the things that Professor Chopra recognized was the need for inexpensive substitutes for materials and sourcing from local agencies for equipment, inks and paper. In fact he enthused everyone so much that I distinctly remember that the gentleman who made the printing press for him in Turkman Gate even postponed his marriage which was to be solemnized in Pakistan so that he could finish making the etching press for him! The press itself was a derivative of a sugar cane juice extractor. The mechanics of the machine were quite similar to an etching press. With relevant modifications Mr Chopra was able to devise a perfectly acceptable indigenously designed intaglio printing press." (Anupam Sud in conversation with Shukla Sawant and Subba Ghosh from *Transgression in Print: Anupam Sud (Four Decades)* edited by Geeti Sen 2007)

Though she was the youngest member of Group 8, Anupam Sud went on to become one of the most significant women artists of her generation. She has used the intaglio process in all its variations: etching and drypoint in combinations with the viscosity process and advanced wiping technology. Restraint is the keynote of her work. While her sympathies and concerns are often feminist, a recurring theme in her work is the universal human predicament.

Many artists who were primarily painters also experimented with printmaking, often inspired by the efforts of Group 8. Veteran Bengali artist Paritosh Sen claimed that, "You cannot be a good printmaker if you are not a good painter." Numerous famous Indian painters like MF Husain were responsible for the proliferation of printmaking into diverse techniques, mediums, and technologies, and their influence fed the growing demand for prints in the current market. Artists who found themselves attracted to printmaking included senior masters such as Amitabha Banerjee, Lalu Prasad Shaw, Laxma Goud, Paramjit Singh, Sanat Kar; and more recent artist/printmakers like Swapan Kr Das, Anupam Sud, Shukla Sen Poddar and Anita Chakravarty. While Sanat Kar evolved wood intaglio, cardboard intaglio and sun mica engravings, Swapan Das leads the international coterie of printmakers in the multiplicity of colour gradations that can be introduced into a single linocut up to in some of his work.

Although prints are cheaper than paintings, they retain exclusivity because of the limited editions that are permitted to bear the artist's signature. The number of editions made from each plate is limited, and the matrix is thereafter broken or cancelled by slashing through with a diagonal line. Printmaking is tedious as the entire process is executed by the artist himself, and exposes the artist to acidic fumes and physically stressful working conditions…a fact that is little known to many casual collectors.

Manifesto

Group 8 is composed of artists who have come together with a purpose to create, a better understanding and higher standard for the contemporary print and for its creator-the graphic artists to give him a chance to be heard as well as seen.to spread the knowledge of graphic techniques and convey their aesthetic qualities; to encourage experimentation, exchange of information and the establishment of a well equipped graphic workshop; to promote the use of prints in publications in houses and industries as an a means of cultural communication and to stimulate the collecting of prints by individuals and public institutions. the group recognises that art as an activity must not be divorced from life, that the art of a nation must necessarily express the soul of its people and work hand in hand with various other constructive forces of progress. With this end in view the members of group 8 will recognise.

Membership will be restricted to working artists but writers, musicians, poets, critic or dramatists who may share our views are welcome to associate with us.

They provided an opportunity for members not only to work but they also intend to have a critique session or evening where they would bring their works and discussions were made. Even further, the group also had experimental work sessions conducted, resulting in extension of the understanding as also discovery of new effects by the use of non-traditional materials and techniques. This helped in developing an attitude in a better and mature way towards each other`s work and more importantly towards their commitments of forming the group.

Group 8 rightly turned out to be a group of artist devoted sincerely and completely to printmaking. The dreams were materialized and thoughts were put into practise the myths were broken by the sincere efforts of the ardent teacher and his students.
Chopra is also the moving spirit of the `` group 8`` of Delhi, in association of working printmakers most of whom are senior students of the Delhi college of Art where he has taken over teaching graphics from Hore. he is mostly due to his keen interest in the students that they have been able to do so well in recent years. As an extension of this activity Chopra and his young colleagues joined hands in forming the `Group 8` i 1968.The inaugural show in September 1968 made a time impression. The Group organised an excellent all India Graphic exhibition in December the same year.

Most of the members of the ``Group 8``are young artists or final years art students. They are preoccupation with all sorts of abstraction and non-objective mannerism is understandable. That has been the way of many and these youngsters are happy with their fresh discovery. Already some of these ``Group 8`` artist have produced works that hold considerable promise. Among them Anupam Sood has already shown works of very fine potential. Then there are yogshakti chopra and lakshmi dutta and some gifted students all of whom might well produce enduimg graphics.

B.Indian Printmakers Guild

A group of artists working in various printmaking media, made a joint effort to project this means of visual expression by holding exhibitions and seminars. On 15th august 12 young members, was founded under the secretary of Mr.K.R.Subanna, which took up the responsibility of underlining the significance of printmaking on their shoulders.its members Anandmoy Bannerjee, Bhula Bhattacharya,Dattatraya Apte, Jayant Gajera,Kanchan chander,Kavita Nayar, K.R.Subanna,Moti Zharotia,Shukla sawant,Sushant Guha,Sukhwinder singh and Subba Ghosh, should be creative means of expression and hightlighting if through well planned.

They felt the need of this, as even though large numbers of artists were using these processes, the ice of misunderstanding surrounding this medium had not really broken. Along with drawing attention to the beauty of this medium and further explanation of its potential they made the art lovers, aware of its physical process, the norms of editions and the role of the medium to reach wider audience.

The Indian printmakers guild held is first exhibition in 1990.It was just a beginning seeking a positive response from the public. The Prints that were exhibited were executed in Garhi Studios which by now had already become one of the oldest community workshops in India. The exhibited prints were executed in relief, planographic and intaglio processes. Their first catalogue was the outcome of the positive response received from various galleries, private institutions, individuals and the Lalit kala Akademi. The catalogue included a brief information about original print and various glossary of terms. Also during the exhibition, the general public an students were invited to freely interact with the artists and question them about the intricacies of the medium.

C. Special references of printmaking activity in the Realist group

"Towards the end of summer in the year 1984, we, a group of friends had gathered in Santiniketan. Many of us had spread across the country in search of means to earn a

living. What brought all of us together was a desire for union and a shared philosophy. We were of the belief of a cohesiveness in cultural practice and in the creation of a visual language relevant to the times we were in. Through afternoons and evenings, we gathered at various places spread across Santiniketan - under the warm trees by Hatipukur or in the dense shadows at Bonopulaktola; or at homes spread across, here and there. We argued, discussed. From that time onwards, we met during every summer break. We worked, argued, discussed, planned out different things."

In the year 1983, many students who had graduated from Kala Bhavana towards the end of the 70s travelled to Delhi for the purpose of work. Of these were Nirmalendu Das, Suranjan Basu, Rati Basu, Nitai Mazumdar, Sumantra Sengupta, Susanta Guha. On the other side were co-students like Pulak Dutta, who was employed in Bangalore and who would come over to Santiniketan for the summer break. These students did not lag in their practice of art despite being employment. Another friend and co student Amit Mukherjee, had, at that time, completed his studies in art history from Baroda and was working in Delhi in the area of art heritage.

At fag end of 1983, these co students and friends would meet in the evenings in the front campus of the National School of Drama, adjoining Mandi House. The discussions would be on various topics; there were different kinds of exchange that took place. it was during this juncture that an artist camp was thought of in order that these exchanges and thinking would be consolidated upon.

There was a common base that bound these young people together - they all practiced figured work combined with elements of social awareness.

All of the youngsters mentioned had a close bonding and relationship with senior art practitioner and teacher Somenath Hore - either through direct means or indirect means. From Delhi, Nirmalendu Das sent across a letter to Somenath hore stating clearly their future plans. They had in mind to form a group of their own based upon their individual ideals. The letter also expressed the desire to conduct the camp at Santiniketan. Somenath Hore responded with enthusiasm and encouragement and offered his home as venue for the camp.

Subsequently, there were more discussions and exchanges held in Delhi. The core group expanded to include more members. In the following summer of May 1984, the artists travelled to Santiniketan. Another co student Pinaki Barua who was at the time residing in Calcutta expressed his eagerness to be part of the group. But, owing to unavoidable circumstances, the camp could not be held, as planned. Somenath Hore expressed inhibition to organize such a large camp of so many artists.

In the history of modern art in India, we find instances of many groups who have collectively done group shows in galleries and done collective studio practice. It is in this context that the Realist Group needs to be seen and studied; what is of special significance is that this Group was based upon a defined ideology and had a written manifesto as what their aims and ideals were. No other artist group in India had so much significance based upon a written manifesto.

In that same year, in the month of December 1984, the Realist Group organized a small exhibition with the purpose to enable them to bring the members closer on the shared platform that they were striving to build.

Two years later, in the year 1986, the Group, held a comparatively bigger exhibition in Santiniketan. During this time, quite many members had left Delhi and made Santiniketan their base. Suranjan Basu and Rati Basu left their jobs in Delhi and Pulak Dutta beacme a teacher in Patha Bhavana while Nirmalendu Das became a teacher in Kala Bhavana. In other words, the centre of work and execution shifted from Delhi to Santiniketan.

Every year, in the summer, the Group would come together, work together, discuss their work. Alongside, art camps were organized where vital contemporary social, political and cultural areas were expressed and articulated in art and exchange. By way of instance, the concern and point of expression in the camp held in the year 1991 was the communal unrest of that time and year.

Aside from this, camps were held that primarily focused upon the method and technique of printmaking. For instance, in 1985, there was a camp on woodcuts, and in the year 1987, there was a camp on linocuts, and in 1992, there was a camp on the silk screen

process. These events were noteworthy. In the succeeding years, in 2000 and 2001, two camps were held on terracotta sculpture. All of the aforementioned activities were held upon initiation of the Realists.

in 1990, the Realist Group along with the Kanoria Centre for Arts of Ahmedabad jointly organized a camp on Comic Art that focused upon the satire and pungency expressed in art.

One of the most prominent and successful exhibitions of the Realist Group that was gallery centred was the exhibition held in the Birla Academy of Arts and Culture in Calcutta in the year 1990. In a review written in the journal "Desh" of May 08, 1990 noted art critic Pronabranjan Roy stated that the Realist Group had unlike others "were bound together by an agenda that sets them apart from other groups in that they were primarily set upon the socio political and economic crises and concerns. the classes in society, the haves and the have not's, the oppressor and the oppressed. Theirs is a distinct political voice and agenda in the framework of social realities.

The succeeding exhibition in the succeeding year, i.e., 1992 was also held at the Birla Academy of Art and Culture. It was important in that the exhibition highlighted the terrible communal situation in the country at the time.

The third and last exhibition of the Realist Group was held in the Jahangir Art Gallery in the year 1994 from December 19 till December 25.

Through various means and methods that included art camps, workshops, and gallery cantered exhibitions, the Realist Group brought to focus the prevalent social commentaries... their affirmation was that art was not aesthetically consumed - it was not easily available to those who could have a meaningful interaction with it". In this regard, the observation made by Somenath Hore is of paramount significance: " Art has been hung up in galleries in which only the few in the cities have access - art is alienated from the throbbing pulsating pulse of life and humanity." The core ethos of the Realist Group echoed and voiced and reaffirmed such a belief. The Realists brought into practice what they felt to be that " the relation between art and society is spontaneous; hence feelings and such are social in nature. What is revealed in art are

aspects of social life and living. Therefore art is an intimate means of engaging with society. The underlying bedrock is that art needs to go out to society. The Realists, therefore, came out of galleries and sought to bring art into open public access where access was uninhibited. In this, their first attempt was an exhibition at the Bolpur Girls' School in 1987. Later, they exhibited at a political gathering in Burdwan and Howrah.

Also, the Realists wanted that art and the aesthetics should reach out to the very ordinary. If we study the modern art history of the country, we find that in the years 1908 -09 Nandalal Bose, of his own individual efforts, had created small little paintings and had sold them for a pittance and wanted to spread art among the those without means and access to visual creativity - the very ordinary. This single effort of Nandalal turned out to deeply successful.

The Poush mela - instituted during the winter month at Santiniketan was a gathering of artists and locals and folks who streamed in from neighbouring areas. In the year 1986, the Realists had a stall to their own which they named Sandhane - In Search. The primary purpose was to sell creatively made calendars, woodcuts, linocuts, etching prints in order that the simple folk of the earth have an access and approach to such artwork.

Also noteworthy of the Realists is their experiments in the mediums they choose to practice; their efforts both as individual artists and as collective team is praiseworthy. By way of example, the scroll painting worked upon collectively during the summer break of 1986 deserves mention.

In the following year, in 1987, the group undertook another scroll painting. The enormity of the scroll painting had detailed depictions of the lives of the artists - in their social and individual conflicts and troubles. Yet again, this was a collaborative effort.

There were efforts equally praiseworthy and of note; for instance, the Group made folios of their prints in different media, namely that of woodcuts and linocuts. Different artists have approached aspects of life and society in their own manner of being. In this aspect, in 1987 was the production of a folio entitled "Servant Maid servant" dealing with an important aspect of social life; it constituted ten collared linocuts.

In the folio of 1986 entitled Saw Mill the artists who participated were Aloke Som, Nirmalendu Das, Pinaki Barua, Probir Biswas, Pulak Dutta, Suranjan Basu, Rati Basu, Sujata Mukherjee, Sushanta Guha, and Tarit Bhattacharya.

For the Servant Maid Servant folio, the participating artists were Pinaki Barua, Probir Biswas, Nitai Mazumdar, Sushanta Guha, Ramprosad Bhattacharya, Rati Basu, Suranjan Basu, Aloke Som, and Nirmalendu Das. Every work had a complete edition of 18; the different use of colour in every individual work is representative of the experiments that the group undertook.

The medium of leno is such that with every succeeding layer the form expands making it difficult to take prints with each added layer. But, credit goes to the Realists that they resolved this technical hitch by means of a window frame and the means by which you need to take the print through an etching press.

Given such a foolproof method, the two members of the group , Nirmalendu Das and Suranjan Basu, who were teachers in the Printmaking Department at Kala Bhavana imparted this knowledge to the students.

The Realist Group also played an active role in organizing exhibitions and since they had an active political voice they actively participated and organized exhibitions in political gatherings and meetings.

Of mention here is the 27th state level meeting of the SFI that was held in Dakbangla grounds at Bolpur from February 23 to 27, 1994. In this, owing primarily to the efforts put in by Suranjan Basu the works of the past present and future artists of Santiniketan were on display; the artists included Nandalal Bose, Dhirendra DevBurman, Benode Bihari Mukherjee, RamKinkar Baij, Biswaroop Basu, Sukhomoy Mitra, Probas Sen, Somenath Hore, Reba Hore, KG Subramanium, Pranab DevBurman, Sarbari RoyChowdhury, Arun Pal, Pranab SenGupta, Suhas Roy, Joen Chowdhury, Sushen Ghosh, Janak Jhankar Narzary; from the Realist artists there were Probir Biswas, Nirmalendu Das, Pinaki Barua, Rati Basu, Suranjan Basu, Pulak Dutta, Ramprosad Bhattacharya, Sukanya Das, Sushanta Guha. Chandana Hore, Tapan Haldar, CK Murali, Kabita Murali, Fazlur Rahman, TV Santosh, Sanchayan Ghosh, Subhabrata

RaiChowdhury, Biswajit Chakrabarty, Saibal Ray, Amit Kundu - some prominent ex students of Kala Bhavana.

In another endeavour of the following year, in 1999, there was a drawing exhibition of the Realists.

In the next year, in 2000, in a special function of Bolpur College, there was another exhibition; primarily owing to the efforts of Suranjan Basu.

On April 03, 2002, one of the foremost figureheads of the Realist Group, Suranjan Basu, passed away, of a sudden. As to how dedicated Suranjan Basu was can be gleaned from a writing of Nirmalendu Das in which he states that upon hearing Tublu (nickname of Suranjan Basu) rushed to Rati's house fearing that the Group would break. "We cannot let the Group break, at any cost."

In the month of November 2002, there was a retrospective exhibition of Suranjan Basu.

As to the art scenario of Bengal in the 1980s, noted art critic PronabRanjan Roy states that the "art had lost its strength, flavour, character, it zeal for life. There were no experimentations - everything went with the staid and the stated - there was no questions thrown, no challenges to rise up to. It fell into a pattern, a routine. Of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, there was a revolutionary spirit to Bengal's artists. it became dry and bereft in the eighties. Can we look back at the preceding decades and analyze? Were there no contemporary concerns? If so, then that was a sad outlook.

In this "If art is a collective effort and should be seen as a movement, then it pack in a political punch. All these depend on the social and political conditions as to who and what and where. Those who move against the tide can create social conflicts. But, it can create a movement and be the impulse for transformation.

It is in this background that the Realist Group is of special significance.

In this chapter the author shall take all the information in this trial, collected through available materials, by means of direct observation and also by interviewing people

concerned in order to recognize with all these combined effort for a considerable period ultimately resulted into printmaking getting a meaningful deserving place in the art hierarchy.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

A collective effort from prominent group consisting of eminent artist definitely can become a topic of research for any art scholar.

The detailed narrated makes it easy to conclude that, how the group activity functioned as a catalyst for the printmaking along with its cause to get the deserved place and due recognition.

The response received by the groups, brought in a sense of security to the printmakers to continue their work even without their attachment with institution.

The other aspect is the excellent commitment from the well known artist to work with a common agenda.

With these in view one can say with confidence that without the group activity this form of art that is printmaking would not have reached this stage which we see today .

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